

REMARKS

Claims 1, 6-8, 24, and 29-31 remain pending in the present application and stand rejected. Independent claims 1 and 24 have been amended to more particularly specify a visibility flag. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added to the application by the Amendment.

The Examiner has finally rejected the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Koppolu (U.S. Patent No. 5,706,458). Applicants respectfully traverse the Section 103 rejection insofar as it may be applied to the claims as amended.

Independent claim 1 recites a unified user interface for an application that has component tables and a master table. Each component table corresponds to a component of the application and includes at least one command for the corresponding component and a description for adding the command to the user interface. Each command also has an associated priority. The master table is merged from the component tables and includes available command and available command vectors for the application. Each command and command vector has a unique object identifier.

As amended, each command and command vector also has a visibility flag specifying whether the command / command vector is to be displayed within the interface to a user of the interface. That is to say, the visibility flag does not specify whether the command / command vector (hereinafter, 'command') is fully or partially displayed within the interface, but whether such command is displayed at all.

Independent claim 24 recites the subject matter of claim 1 albeit in the form of a computer-readable medium having instructions that implement the interface.

Such a visibility flag as now recited in claims 1 and 24 is disclosed in the application as filed at about page 17, and visibility in general is disclosed at about page 21, in a paragraph that states:

A visibility section 340 determines the static visibility of commands. Commands may exist in an application but not be visible to a user. Such commands are set to non-visible. Commands can be put in this section that do not appear or become visible unless a specific component is active or installed. Typically, commands may be inserted into this section. Groups or menu identifiers may not be

placed here. Commands not in this section are defined as visible by default. For one embodiment, a command is added to this section multiple times to permit the command to be visible for multiple components only. When the command tables are merged together, the multiple group identifications will be OR'd to determine the final static visibility. The visibility section includes 2 parameters. The first parameter is the command identification. This is the unique identification of the command for which static visibility is controlled. The second parameter is the identification of the component that the command is visible for. When the corresponding component is active, the command will be visible.

Thus, and again, the visibility flag as recited in claims 1 and 24 is not with regard to whether a corresponding command is available to a user of the interface, but whether the command is displayed to such a user through the interface. Thus, it may be the case that a command is available, but is not displayed based on the state of the corresponding visibility bit. In contradistinction, it may be the case that a command is not available, but is still displayed based on the state of the corresponding visibility bit. Of course, all other permutations of 'available' and 'visible' may exist in an interface according to the present invention as recited in claims 1 and 24. However, it is to be appreciated that such claims 1 and 24 contain a distinction based on visibility only, and not on availability.

As was previously pointed out, the Koppolu reference discloses a system and method for generating a merged menu list using a conflict resolution protocol that includes container menus of a container application and server menus of a server application. The container application has a container object and a container window environment, and the server application has a containee object which is contained within the container object. (Abstract)

However, and significantly, the Koppolu reference does not disclose or even suggest that each command has a visibility flag that specifies whether the command is displayed to a user through the Koppolu interface, as is recited in claims 1 and 24. Instead, and as the Examiner points out, the Koppolu system includes functionality that determines whether a command is available to such a user, and the Koppolu command is thus displayed to the user differently based on such availability. Specifically, and as the Examiner points out within the Office Action, availability within a drop-down menu is shown by a command being displayed in a solid fashion or a black, while non-availability within such a drop-down menu is shown by the command being displayed in gray the command is displayed in a ghosted fashion or a gray.

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To summarize, then, the Koppolu reference does not disclose or even suggest a visibility flag that specifies whether a command is displayed to a user through an interface in the manner recited in claims 1 and 24. Instead the Koppolu reference only discloses specifying whether such a command is available based on differentially displaying such command within such interface. Moreover, and again, Applicants respectfully submit that displaying or not displaying a command according to a visibility flag is materially different from and not akin to showing whether such a command is available by differentially displaying same, if only for the reason that a command can be available but not displayed, available and displayed, not available but displayed, and not available and not displayed. That is, whether a command is displayed and whether a command is available are mutually exclusive states, and therefore not akin to one another.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the Koppolu reference does not in fact teach or suggest a command that has a visibility flag that specifies whether the command is to be displayed within the interface to a user of the interface in the manner recited in claims 1 and 24. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the Koppolu reference cannot be applied to make obvious claims 1 and 24 or any claims depending therefrom, including claims 6-8 and 29-31. As a result, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the Section 103 rejection.

In view of the foregoing Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application including claims 1, 6-8, 24, and 29-31 is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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